

Amendments to the claims:

The following listing of the claims replaces all previous listings and versions of the claims in the application:

Listing of the claims:

- 5 1. (currently amended) A method of applying and evenly distributing a quantity of particulate material such as ground or dried coffee within a shallow tray, comprising:
- providing said quantity,
 - delivering said quantity within said tray, said tray having a plurality of pins to be positioned within said particulate material while vibrating said tray,
- 10 – vibrating said tray horizontally at a low vibrational frequency and for a specific period of time for causing said particulate material to be evenly distributed within said tray, and
- transferring said quantity from said tray to a further processing station ~~such as a freezing station or a drying station.~~
- 15 2. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, said quantity being provided from an overhead distributor ~~such as an overhead openable hopper.~~
3. (currently amended) The method according to ~~any of the claims 1 or 2~~ claim 1, wherein said tray ~~having~~ has a bottom surface ~~constituted by~~ selected from the group consisting of a flexible and foldable foil, ~~[[or] a flexible and foldable web, [[or]]~~ and a shuttle conveyor belt.
- 20 4. (currently amended) The method according to ~~any of the claims 1-3~~ claim 1, said plurality of pins constituting movable pins extending into said tray from a stationary frame in which said tray is suspended for allowing said horizontal vibration.
5. (currently amended) The method according to ~~any of the claims 1-3~~ claim 1, said plurality of pins being constituted by stationary pins ~~fixated~~ fixed to said tray and movable with said tray.

6. (currently amended) The method according to ~~any of the claims 1-5~~ claim 1, said vibrational tray being vibrated horizontally at a frequency of 0.5-25 Hz ~~such as 1-20 Hz, e.g. 2-15 Hz such as 3-10 Hz, preferably approximately 5-6 Hz, such as 0.5-2 Hz, 2-4 Hz, 4-6 Hz, 6-8 Hz, 8-10 Hz, 10-12 Hz, 12-14 Hz, 14-16 Hz, 16-18 Hz, 18-20 Hz, 20-22 Hz, 22-25 Hz.~~

7. (currently amended) The method according to ~~any of the claims 1-6~~ claim 1, said vibrational tray being vibrated for a period of time of ~~less than 15 sec. or 15 sec.-2 min. such as 1-3 sec., 3-5 sec., 5-7 sec., 7-9 sec., 9-11 sec., 11-13 sec., 13-15 sec., preferably approximately 9 Hz or 15-30 sec., 30-60 sec., 60-120 sec.~~

8. (currently amended) An apparatus for applying and evenly distributing a quantity of particulate material such as ground or dried coffee within a shallow tray, comprising:

- a delivery means for delivering said quantity,
- said shallow tray constituted by a vibrational tray for vibrating at a low frequency and being positioned below said delivery means for receiving said quantity from said delivery means and having a plurality of pins to be positioned within said quantity while vibrating said tray[[]],
- a vibrational generating means connected to said tray for vibrating said vibrational tray for causing said quantity received within said tray to be evenly distributed within said tray,
- a timer for actuating said vibrational generating means for a specific period of time for causing said vibrational tray to be vibrated for a specific period of time set by said timer, and
- a transfer means for transferring a quantity from said tray to a further processing station ~~such as a freezing station or a drying station.~~

9. (currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 8, said delivery means being constituted by ~~an overhead distributor, preferably an overhead openable hopper~~ positioned above said tray.

10. (currently amended) The apparatus according to ~~any of the claims~~ claim 8 or 9, said tray having a bottom surface ~~constituted by~~ selected from the group consisting of a flexible and foldable foil, ~~[[or]]~~ a flexible and foldable web constituted by a shuttle conveyor belt.

11. (currently amended) The apparatus according to ~~any of the claims 8-10~~ claim 8, said plurality of pins constituting movable pins extending into said tray from a stationary frame in which said tray is suspended for allowing said horizontal vibration.

12. (currently amended) The apparatus according to ~~any of the claims 8-10~~ claim 8, said plurality of pins being constituted by stationary pins ~~fixated~~ fixed to said tray and movable with said tray.

13. (currently amended) The apparatus according to ~~any of the claims 8-12~~ claim 8, ~~such the~~ vibrational tray being vibrated horizontally at a frequency of ~~0,5-25~~ 0,5-25 Hz, ~~such as 1-20 Hz, e.g. 2-15 Hz, such as 3-10 Hz, preferably approximately 5-6 Hz.~~